



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

SBA Number : 03-SS-01-1030  
Release Date: Immediate

Contact: Susan Chang  
714-550-7420 x 3808  
e-mail [susan.chang@sba.gov](mailto:susan.chang@sba.gov)

## **SBA ANNOUNCES MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**

**Santa Ana** - Rita Kalwani, President of KAL Architects, Inc., of Irvine, CA has been named Minority Small Business Person of the Year for the Santa Ana District of the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Sandy Sutton, SBA District Director announced her selection saying, "Rita Kalwani exemplifies the American ideal of entrepreneurship. After starting her business in her home, Rita worked hard to develop and expand her business. I am happy that SBA programs have helped in that success."

Ms. Kalwani has been in business since 1991. She started the business from her home, while her sons attended elementary school. Later she moved into a condo with several other businesses, and then into much larger quarters near the airport. Last year the company purchased its own two-story building in Irvine with assistance received from an SBA 504 loan and now has a staff of 18 at the Irvine offices.

Ms. Kalwani has done architecture work for the U. S. Navy, the U. S. Air Force, the Department of Agriculture, the General Services Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as numerous private sector clients. Currently, she is overseeing the construction of an exhibit hall and outdoor amphitheater for the Forest Service in the San Bernardino mountains near Big Bear.

Ms. Kalwani is a member of the Society of American Military Engineers and serves on its Small Business Committee. Her company is certified in SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program and she is a state certified interior designer. Ms. Kalwani was chairman of the 8(a) Architects and Engineers Association for five years - devoting substantial time to helping other companies learn the ropes of marketing to the federal government. The pressure of a growing business has taken her away from that group - but many still call her for advice.

Ms. Kalwani is married, and has one son in college and another in high school.

Ms. Kalwani will receive her award at a breakfast to be held October 30<sup>th</sup> in Garden Grove sponsored by the Santa Ana SBA office. National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) week was held September 28-October 1, 2003 with commemorative events in Washington, D.C.

***For more information on all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA, or visit the SBA's extensive website at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)***

***###***